

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, 17, and 19 are pending.

There are no formal matters outstanding.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-10 stand rejected as obvious over YASUDA U.S. 2001/0045531 in view of KELLEHER et al. 5,734,197 further in view of GO 6,377,742 further in view of GO et al. 6,008,528 and further in view of KUSUDA et al. 5,245,198.

Claims 11-14 stand rejected as obvious over YASUDA in view of KELLEHER et al. in view of GO and further in view of WILLIAMS et al. 6,307,755.

Claims 15 and 17 stand rejected as obvious over YASUDA in view of MIZUUCHI 6,194,238 further in view of KELLEHER et al.

Claim 19 stands rejected as obvious over YASUDA in view of MIZUUCHI further in view of KELLEHER et al. and further in view of GO.

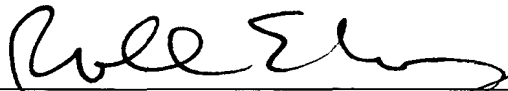
As is clear from the above rejections, all of these rejections rely on the teachings of YASUDA. YASUDA has a filing date of April 19, 2001. By contrast, the priority date of the present application is August 8, 2000 as established by a verified translation of Japanese priority application filed herewith. Accordingly, YASUDA is no longer available as a reference against the claims.

Without YASUDA, the obviousness rejections are not viable. Accordingly, passage to issue is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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